GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4169
ANSWERED ON:28.03.2017
Field Trials of GM Crops
Kothapalli Smt. Geetha

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Technical Expert Committee (TEC) appointed by the Supreme Court on open air release of genetically modified organisms including field trials and cultivation had submitted two reports that highlighted certain regulatory gaps and suggestions for improving the bio-safety regulation in the country;
(b) if so, the details thereof;
(c) whether five members of the TEC had recommended that the GM crop field trials be put on hold till all recommendations are implemented while the sixth member, recommended that the existing safety norms prescribed by the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC), for conduct of field trials are adequate and if so, the details thereof;
(d) whether the Government has not accepted the moratorium recommendation on the grounds that current regulations and protocols followed in biosafety assessment are as per international best practices; and
(e) if so, the details and the present status thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE)

(a), (b) & (c). The Technical Expert Committee (TEC) constituted by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India had submitted two reports of which five members of the committee submitted one report and another report was submitted by one member separately. The five-member committee suggested that a secretariat comprising of dedicated scientists with area expertise as well as expertise in biosafety needs to be established and specific sites for conducting confined field trials to be designated. Dr. R. S. Paroda, Expert member has suggested capacity building initiatives to stakeholders for enhancing public awareness.

(d) & (e) Yes Madam. Union of India filed a counter affidavit stating that the regulatory mechanism in India concerning Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)are adequate and are stricter than the regulatory mechanism existing in other Countries and agreed to further strengthen the existing regulatory system. Accordingly, a Biosafety Support Unit (BSU) having multidisciplinary experts for evaluation of applications is functioning under Department of Biotechnology which actively supports Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC). GEAC has been constituted with 26 multidisciplinary experts with knowledge of Risk Assessment and other technical issues.

Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC) have organized about 50 capacity building training workshops for stakeholders like regulators, scientists, media personnel, farmers, students, Department of custom, plant quarantine and State government officials. Several public awareness materials and knowledge products were prepared in eight different Indian languages namely Hindi, Marathi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada & Bangla and circulated & distributed among several Central and State agencies.

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